/24 cont./

584 from which she does not emerge until a feast is held in the big house. Then she is led into the house, and one of the elderly friends of the family, or the father himself, puts a piece of liver on a spit and begins to pray and to express wishes that the couple before him may be happy, prolific, etc.

When the groom returns from the house of his bride's parents to that of his father, he again is not allowed to show himself to his parents and older relatives. This, too, would be considered /25/ indecent. He does not appear until after the feast has been given by his father. Now the same blessings and wishes that were given when the bride was led out of her amhara are repeated, and the groom gives presents to his mother, father, uncle, foster father, and in general to all older relatives. This feast bears the name aphkhasharkhe (portion of shame, remover of shame).

585 After the preparation of the dowry, the bride's parents
[583] invite their future son-in-law in order to entrust their daughter to him; at the appointed time the groom comes to get her with his friends and her girl-friends. On the way home with the bride,
[533] the marriage song bedniera (happiness) is sung, there is trick-
[526] riding on horses, pistol-shooting, etc. When they are approaching the house of the groom, they send someone ahead to announce the arrival of the bride to the groom's father and mother. Such a messenger stops somewhere near the gates of the house and
[502] without a word fires a pistol in the air. In the house he is offered some honey or sugar.

Meanwhile the wedding procession reaches the house. Here the friends and girl-friends amuse themselves for a while with a huge round loaf of wheaten bread, throwing it three times over the bride and over the house and breaking it into pieces, which are picked up by those present. After this the bride is led into the house, at the entrance of which two men hold swords crossed overhead. At the threshold she is offered honey or sugar, with the words, "May God give you a tongue as sweet." After the bride enters the house she is handed a cup filled with grains of gomi, on top of which an egg has been placed. Then she is led three times around the hearth while she scatters the grains of gomi. The bride is then seated, and they hand her a little boy

/29 cont./

765 the table at every breakfast and supper.

On the fortieth day, or on one of the Saturdays, the mourning banquet for the deceased is held. A ram is killed and meat dishes are prepared. The relatives of the deceased, who up to [785] this time have been fasting, do not break their fast until this day. The mother and the foster mother, however, fast for a whole year.

The second mourning-banquet involves even greater expenditures. This banquet is called aphskhuvra /see foreign text/ (1).

1. aphs = soul; khu = lot, order; vra = to do, to carry out; i.e., the giving of the banquet in honor of the soul of the deceased.

On this occasion animals are killed, much is spent, and an effort is made to satisfy the soul of the deceased as well as possible. [795] The Abkhaz are convinced that an unsatisfied soul can harm not only their property, but also themselves. This banquet is held in the second year after the death of the departed, more often in the autumn when there is an abundance of everything.

For the day of the aphskhuvra guests are invited to bewail the deceased. Sometimes marula (horse-races) are also organized [541] on this same day in honor of the deceased. If the races have been [202] planned beforehand, everybody is informed in good time by messengers. Meanwhile the hosts are preparing ample supplies of provisions, animals, wine, cheese, bread, etc. On the eve of the aphskhuvra, the belongings of the deceased are on display, and the horse of the departed is tethered near them, covered with a mourning blanket. The deceased's weapons are hung on the saddle of his horse, his rifle, pistol, dagger, saber, whip, etc.; subsequently there is lamentation at the grave with the remains.

And then this scene takes place: a crowd of people of both [302] sexes stand around, barefoot and in mourning. The men's hair is braided, as is the women's. People on foot and on horseback [268] approach them, each of them leading one or two bulls, or a few